

A three day holiday follows Ramadan, Eid al-Fitr, during which there are great celebrations and much visiting of neighbours to wish them "Eid-Kum Mubarak" (Happy Holiday), the answer to which is "Aadana Allah Ala Amthaleh." On the Eid the Ruler receives visitors at the Palace. The Eid is particularly colourful owing to the bright new clothes which are worn by the children. The boys wear new white thobes and bright-coloured silk caps and the girls proudly appear in gold-decorated dresses. In many cases small boys go calling with their parents, eagerly clutching handfuls of sweets as they leave their various hosts. Local bands, composed of the negro inhabitants of Bahrain, pass through the streets of the towns and villages playing tunes on their locally made instruments. These include many types of drums, flutes, lutes and a local form of bagpipe made from the stomach of a sheep. As the bands of players go from house to house they are tipped by the owners, who often, if they are wealthy, provide a meal for the musicians. [534] 796 527

NEW YEAR'S DAY

It is the custom in Bahrain on New Year's Day of the Christian Calendar for groups of Bahrainis of African origin to form into bands and go playing through the streets of Manama. These men, who to day are the same as all other Bahrainis, are descended from freed slaves or were themselves slaves who escaped to Bahrain and were manumitted. In gratitude for their freedom they thus celebrate New Year's Day. They play first at H.B.M.'s Political Agency and the Adviserate and on leaving these places they split up into smaller parties to serenade their friends. Around Bahrain flags, borne by the leaders of the musicians, these people, both men and women, dance steps and play the music which was brought many centuries ago to Bahrain by their African ancestors. In the music to which they dance the rhythm of the drum plays an important part, but to a European it may seem strange that the drummers frequently leave off playing whenever they feel tired, or if they want to talk to a friend or drink a cup of tea or coffee, and when the distraction is over they again join the band. 563 527 533

It has occasionally been stated in newspapers and even recently in a book on Bahrain by some one who should know better that slavery still exists not only in the Persian Gulf but also in Bahrain. The celebrations of these Bahrainis at their freedom are proof enough that in Bahrain at least slavery is a thing of the past. [567]

THE HAJJ

The Hajj is the annual pilgrimage to Mecca which, according to his religion, every Moslem who is able to do so must perform once at least during his lifetime. The pilgrimage takes place during the month of Dhul Hajj. The pilgrims, many of whom have reached Mecca by most hazardous routes, wearing the two white unseamed garments that are mandatory, perform the various rites of the ceremony which includes the circumambulation of the Kaaba, pilgrimages and visits 788 796

796 to various points in the neighbourhood of Mecca connected with the
788 life of the Prophet Muhammad and drinking the water of Zamzam Well. On the last day of the ceremony the pilgrims stand before Ararat, a small mountain near Mecca, and throw stones at various places to symbolise the stoning of the devil. On the 10th Day of Dhul Hajj a great feast takes place. The pilgrims remove their pilgrim's garb and throughout the Moslem world there is feasting and visiting.

796 In Bahrain, Eid al-Adhar is celebrated for three days, the 10th,
535 11th and 12th of Dhul Hajj. In former days there were very colourful scenes and ceremonies at this feast, the retainers of the Ruler used to perform war dances in front of the palace, discharging their ancient rifles into the air, and occasionally at an unlucky member of the audience. The divers, who returned home during the Eid, danced in huge groups for the entertainment of the people and were feasted in the houses which they visited, but today the Ruler has few casual retainers and the Bedouin, who were the mainstay of the dances, have settled down and become ordinary citizens. Arab dances are therefore a thing of the past and the men who used to perform in them now find their amusements in attending football matches and cinemas.

MUHARRAM

796 The circumstances that brought about the division of the majority of Moslems into the Sunni and Shiite sects have been mentioned in Chapter II. The battle of Kerbela is still recognised by the Shia of Bahrain as a day of mourning for the martyrs who were killed.

[54L] During the first nine days of the month of Muharram, the first
796 month in the Islamic year, there is a general mourning among the
531 Shia for their loss. In the Bahrain martams, which are religious meet-
[781] ing houses not to be confused with the mosques, preachers tell the story of the growth of Islam and the way in which Ali and his family were set aside by those who became the early Caliphs. These mullas, many of whom come from the Holy Cities of Iraq for the purpose, are often so eloquent that they reduce their audience to tears and wailing for the mortifications inflicted on those whom they regard as the highest of mankind after the Prophet himself. Night and day the tale is unfolded as the mullas take it in turn to preach to the assembled crowds. During the day the martams are not so full but at sunset the congregation increases as men return from their daily work. In the villages and in the towns, in the yellow light of kerosene lamps and in the glare of electricity, the story is told of those events which happened over 12 centuries ago. Many people are introduced into the story, the Old Testament prophets, the Prophet Muhammad, his family and his enemies, angels and archangels and other religious figures.

796 As the days pass the orators and their audience get more carried away so that by the 10th of the month all are ready for the next act of what has been called the "Miracle Play of Hassan and Hussein." This is the public procession of the Shia which takes place every evening

312 many of the travellers who have visited the islands. Men with deflated sheepskins dive down to the spring and place the mouth of the skin over the place where the fresh water emerges ; the skin then fills with fresh water and when full the diver comes to the surface. Before artesian wells were drilled in Bahrain both Muharraaq and Manama obtained much of their water in this way, but today, owing to artesian piped wells and water systems, the undersea springs are little used except those to the north of Bahrain near the pearling banks. A Turkish traveller who visited Bahrain in 1554, Sidi Ali, says of the submarine springs, "The sailors provided with a leather sack, dive down into the sea and bring the fresh water from the bottom for Rais Murad's (the Governor of Bahrain) use. This water is particularly pleasant and cold in spring time. God's Power is boundless !" There is a legend concerning the spring of Abu Mahur which says that in the time of the Caliph Merwan (684-685) a certain Ibn Hakim, a chief in Qatif, wished to marry the lovely daughter of a Bahrain shaikh. His suit was refused and so he attacked the islands and captured all the wells which supplied the towns on Bahrain Island, but the guardian diety of the Bahrainis caused the well Abu Mahur to appear in the sea near Muharraaq to succour his people.

NABIH SALIH

101 A most attractive island is Nabih Salih, set in the Khor-al-Kab
529 between Umm al-Hassan and the mainland of Bahrain. With its
thick cultivation, for the date palms run right down to the sea shore,
and its many springs, including a large pool much frequented by
bathers, Nabih Salih is a very popular place for visitors. In addition
to its pool it is a place of pilgrimage for the Shia of Bahrain who go
to pay their respects to the tomb of Salih after whom the island is named.
The date palms of the island are particularly fine, they compare very favourably with those elsewhere in Bahrain, which is mainly due to the pool already mentioned, Safahiya, which irrigates much of the island.
[505] Nabih Salih can be visited by launch or sailing boat, the nearest point to it on Bahrain is Ain al-Hakim ; boats can also be obtained from Umm al-Hasan or from Sitra. People have been known to swim to the island, but this is not the only way of getting there and in the summer this method is inclined to be rather exhausting.

SITRA

[101] South of Nabih Salih and close to the coast of Bahrain is Sitra
361 Island, which in addition to its many villages and gardens contains the Tank Farm and Drum Plant of BAPCO and the land end of the jetty. The site of these installations is a strip of bare and often sea-swept sands, but to the north of the island there are many gardens and a sizeable pool, Ain Raha, which is much visited by the people of Muharraaq and Manama. Among the villages of North Sitra are Wadiyan, Sufala, Khariyya and Kuriya. Near the third village is a school and police station. To the south of the island is Umm al-Baidh, literally "Mother

During the year the Department sent a deputation consisting of one of the members of the committee and the Superintendent to Kuwait to make a claim for the Waqf funds from the large and very valuable building on the Sea Road west of the Customs pier. This building was acquired by one Hilal Al Materi a Kuwaiti pearl merchant. He dedicated it as a Waqf for charitable purposes, not specifying whether the funds should be spent in Bahrain or in Kuwait. The Sunni Waqf Department obtained an opinion on the case from Al Azhar in Cairo supporting their claim that the Waqf should be spent in the country where the property was situated. The Deputation was not received with any enthusiasm in Kuwait, some sort of compromise was arrived at but at the end of the year the Department had not received any contribution from the Waqf towards charitable objects in Bahrain.

PASSPORT DEPARTMENT

(From the report of Mr. Kadhim Al Asfoor, Passport Officer)

Revenue. The total revenue was Rs. 53,789/-. about Rs. 19,000 less than was collected in 1371. This decrease was due to a shortage of book passports which were being printed in England. Some changes were made in the new passports which now contain the name of the holder on the outside of the cover as well as inside it. A further change in the wording is "date of birth" instead of "age," though at present very few of the people who use the passports know either the date of their birth or their age. Revenue from Travel Passes was Rs. 22,339, from entry forms, Rs. 8,236 and from miscellaneous forms Rs. 5,041.

Pilgrims. Only 280 persons did the Pilgrimage to Mecca, this number included 19 Persians, long resident in Bahrain who were granted passport facilities to perform the pilgrimage. Over 3,500 Shia pilgrims visited the Holy Cities of Iraq, an increase of about 500 over the previous year's number. These pilgrims included many people from the villages. Some of them crossed from Iraq to Persia and visited the Shia shrines of Persia. Such journeys are lengthy and expensive and the increase in the number of Shia pilgrims every year is an indication of prosperity among the working classes.

About 200 Arabs from Bahrain went to the Lebanon, mostly during the summer, this was about half the number who travelled there last year. In spite of inducements by the Government of the Lebanon to encourage tourists from the Gulf the people of Bahrain are beginning to find that they cannot afford to pay the excessively high prices which prevail in Beirut and in mountain resorts. The much advertised wealth of certain Gulf states seems to have caused the people of the Lebanon to regard any Arab from the Gulf as a rich traveller and a potential spender.

Passengers.	Arrivals.			Departures.		
	By Air	By Steamers	By Country Craft	By Air	By Steamers	By Country Craft
	22,542	13,206	34,220	23,758	13,136	35,228

Number of dhows and launches visiting Bahrain : 4,958.

During the year 1,077 gratis passes were issued to Shaikhs, their followers, teachers and students. Numerous members of the Ruling Family with their followers went on hunting trips to Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Kuwait.

During the diving season 496 Persian divers were allowed to land in Bahrain and to return to Persia after the diving season.

[Sunni Waqf Department - - Analyst]